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The University of Dayton

News Release

April 21, 1994

Contact: Teri Rizvi

UD UNVEILS FINAL DESIGN PLANS FOR JOSEPH E. KELLER HALL, NEW HIGH-TECH SCHOOL OF LAW

DAYTON, Ohio -- The University of Dayton will name its proposed School of Law building after Joseph E. Keller, a three-time University of Dayton graduate and a prominent Washington, D.C., attorney who helped start a law school, created a bar review program for black students when they were prohibited from attending other bar programs and allowed financially strapped law students to live at his house for free.

In December 1991, Keller wrote a \$5 million check to UD to support legal education because "I've always been interested in helping people learn to be good lawyers." Just recently, the University established a \$100,000 scholarship endowment for undergraduate students from any academic division and law students in the name of the Keller family.

Today, as University of Dayton officials unveiled final design plans for a \$24.5 million high-tech School of Law, they acknowledged Keller's generosity and his spirit of service to his alma mater by naming the new complex Joseph E. Keller Hall. Initially publicized as an anonymous donation, Keller's is the largest single gift ever received by the University of Dayton.

In addition, the University launched the public phase of a \$10 million fundraising drive in support of the School of Law. The building will be funded through private contributions, tax-exempt bonds and University funds. UD has received gifts of \$7.6 million, including one valued at \$1 million from Mathias H. Heck, a 1930 graduate of the law school and former four-time Montgomery County prosecutor; \$330,000 from Dayton law firms; and \$200,000 from School of Law faculty and staff.

Keller, 87, did not attend the event because he said he's not interested in public

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recognition, only serving as an inspiration to other University of Dayton supporters. "I'm very supportive of the University of Dayton; I always have been," he said in a telephone interview. "My roots came from the University of Dayton. It's the only place I feel I ever got an education."

Brother Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., University of Dayton president, said Keller "exemplifies the best of a University of Dayton education. He's a leader in his field who has lived a life of service. The University of Dayton is blessed by his generosity."

Although Keller, founding partner of Keller and Heckman law firm, gained a national reputation as an expert in communication law in Washington, D.C., he has strong ties to Dayton, where he was born in 1907. His family numbers among the earliest settlers in the Miami Valley. He graduated in 1924 from UD's Preparatory School, earned a B.A. in 1928 and a law degree in 1930. He received an honorary degree from UD in 1991. During high school and college, he wrote film reviews for the *Journal* after winning a \$50 award for the best-written student review of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Ohio Governor and newspaper publisher James Cox appointed him judge of the municipal court of Oakwood from 1930-34 before convincing him to take a post as administrative assistant to the commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission.

Throughout his life, Keller has been extensively involved in volunteer activity. For more than 40 years he was active with the Gorgas Institute of Tropical and Preventative Medicine, serving as general counsel. He has also served as general counsel for the Katherine Pollard Maddux Mental Health Association, which deals with mental health among preschool children. For his four decades of work with the Boy Scouts of America, he has received the Silver Beaver Award, scouting's highest honor, as well as the St. George Medal, the highest Catholic scouting service award from the archdiocese of Washington. He is widely credited for his work in racially integrating the Boy Scouts of America in the Washington, D.C., area. He also worked toward establishing the International School of Law--now George Mason University School of Law--and started bar review courses for black law graduates when they were prohibited from attending other bar programs.

Keller often opened up his home to law students. "He was always on the lookout for those in need of help," said Dennis Meyer, member of UD's board of trustees and a partner in

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the Washington, D.C., firm of Baker and McKenzie. Meyer, a 1957 UD graduate, lived with Keller when he attended law school at Georgetown University.

Construction of Joseph E. Keller Hall, to be located at the entrance to campus just west of Roesch Library, is expected to begin in May 1995 with the building ready for fall 1997 classes. A four-story sunlit atrium will run east and west throughout the 122,500-square-foot brick-and-limestone structure. It will serve as a striking organizing feature for the state-of-the-art new law school and allow light and openness into the law library at the core of the building. The building will be nearly 50 percent larger than the recently dedicated Jesse Philips Humanities Center on campus.

Last year, Dayton-based architect Edge & Tinney conducted a national search for a consulting architect with experience in designing law schools. Their choice, the Chicago firm of Holabird & Root, designed Northwestern University's School of Law, the American Bar Center, the renovation of the University of Wisconsin's School of Law and one of the nation's most technologically advanced law schools, Chicago-Kent School of Law at Illinois Institute of Technology.

Brick walls without and wiring for computer networks within will immediately let a visitor know that this building blends "UD's traditional practicality with sophisticated advanced technology," according to Francis Conte, dean of the School of Law. "Technology won't be an add-on. It will be integrated. We've had the advantage of being able to design the entire educational facility with state-of-the-art technology in mind."

That means every seat in every classroom and faculty office will be wired for computers. In a classroom, a student will be able to use a network-ready notebook computer to tap into a legal research database or a faculty-developed computer application. In the Mathias H. Heck model courtroom, student lawyers will have access to virtually instant transmission of transcripts and video representations of evidence. And in the law library all seats will be wired for information technology as CD-ROMs and other electronic research tools will begin to replace books.

"We can't educate students for the world we grew up in," said Richard Perna, associate dean of the School of Law who worked with Mead Data Central to conduct a study on how computer technology will change legal education in the next decade. "We have to educate them for the world they'll live in. This facility will put the University of Dayton in a select group of law schools that are embracing technology. The environment we expose our students to will give them an edge in their field."